



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2000/138  
22 March 2000

Original: ENGLISH

---

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Fifty-sixth session  
Agenda item 14 (c)

**SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS**

**MASS EXODUSES AND DISPLACED PERSONS**

Letter dated 15 March 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith\*, a document entitled "Information on the humanitarian situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia". I would like to ask you to have it issued as an official document of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 14 (c).

(Signed) Branko BRANKOVIC  
Ambassador  
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

---

\* The annex is reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

**INFORMATION**  
**on the humanitarian situation in the Federal**  
**Republic of Yugoslavia**

Introductory remarks

The prolonged sanctions and their further maintenance in the form of an outer wall of sanctions and sanctions unilaterally imposed by some countries or groups of countries, as well as the NATO aggression and bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have had serious economic and social consequences on the population of our country and on the refugees who found sanctuary in it. Total direct and indirect losses due to the sanctions and NATO bombing are estimated at US\$ 250 billion in the 1992-2000 period. According to still incomplete assessment of the damage, the damage as a result of NATO bombing alone amounts to US\$ 100 billion. The serious humanitarian situation will be difficult to overcome without a considerable international assistance, in particular from the humanitarian organizations within the UN system of specialized agencies, over a longer period of time.

Several thousand people were killed in the NATO aggression. Three million children were directly at risk because of an indiscriminate bombing of populated areas. Children account for 30 per cent of all killed and 40 per cent of all the wounded. At the same time, as many as 200,000 refugee children from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, who had found shelter in the FR of Yugoslavia, once again experienced the horrors of war.

The destruction of commercial and transport infrastructure, housing, hospitals, health institutions, schools, and in particular the power supply system have brought about a very serious humanitarian situation in the country. 100,000 workers lost their jobs as a direct result of the bombing of their industrial facilities and an additional 400,000 indirectly. This in effect means that approximately 2 million people were deprived of their livelihood. In addition, there were already 900,000 people out of work in the FR of Yugoslavia and about 800,000 were made redundant directly as a consequence of the outer wall of sanctions in place over a longer period.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is faced with a fact that the bombing most severely affected the income-generating sectors such as raw materials, electricity and food, which are the country's traditional exports. Destruction of commercial capacity has reduced the possibility of generating GDP which is down by 40 per cent, reflected in a further impoverishment of the population, cuts in the welfare state (health and pension schemes, social security, education) and in a trend towards increased emigration.

The FR of Yugoslavia therefore calls for the broadening of the scope of humanitarian assistance to include both the reconstruction and revitalization of the infrastructure so as to cater for the basic needs of the population. As a result, priority attention should be given to repair of the damaged and construction of the destroyed railways, roads, bridges, residential buildings, collective refugee centres, demolished schools, damaged and destroyed health institutions, heating plants and power distribution systems, as well as to direct assistance in heating oil.

It may be recalled that humanitarian assistance to the FR of Yugoslavia has been greatly politicized. Conditioning of humanitarian aid, not including Yugoslavia in the programmes for the reconstruction, rehabilitation and economic integration of its region indicate a strategic interest of a number of major countries in the region. Therefore, the assessment of the humanitarian situation in the FR of Yugoslavia should be devoid of any political conditionalities insofar as the needs of its population are concerned, including refugees and displaced persons in our country.

#### Refugees and displaced persons

(1) Following the outbreak of wars in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and secession of the former Yugoslav republics, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has confronted the problem of refugees. The number of refugees varied as a result of the heavy fighting and was between 350,000 and 800,000.

In co-operation with UNHCR, the FR of Yugoslavia registered in 1996 the refugees and other persons affected by war. This registration showed that in the territory of the FR of Yugoslavia there was as many as 650,000 refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, 620,000 of them in Serbia alone. The greatest and massive influx of refugees into the FR of Yugoslavia took place in August 1995, when in the first ten days alone, Croatia ethnically cleansed 250,000 Serbs of Krajina, which was followed by the so-called silent exodus of Serbs from Eastern Slavonia. According to our estimates there are as many as 700,000 refugees in the FR of Yugoslavia.

Unlike other countries, around 90 per cent of the refugee population in the FR of Yugoslavia has been accommodated with relatives or friends. Furthermore, most of the refugees have chosen to settle in the more developed parts of the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro.

After the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), deployment of KFOR security forces and UNMIK civilian administration in Kosovo and Metohija, the FR of Yugoslavia is again faced with a new exodus - this time the exodus of Serbian and Montenegrin people and other non-Albanian population from this Serbian province. Since the arrival of

KFOR and UNMIK, 350,000 non-Albanians left Kosovo and Metohija, out of whom 270,000 are Serbs.

Almost 90 per cent of internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija have been accommodated with families and relatives while 10 per cent only in collective centres. Most of internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija have been accommodated exactly in the part of the Republic of Serbia destroyed most in the NATO aggression.

Despite the fact that the Federal Government and the Government of the Republic of Serbia have undertaken all possible measures in order to ensure to internally displaced persons all human rights, guaranteed to them as citizens of the FR of Yugoslavia, we are facing great problems in accommodating internally displaced persons in collective centres, i.e. in providing alternative accommodation, food, footwear, clothes and medicine, primarily due to the lack of financial resources.

(2) In the past eight years, the FR of Yugoslavia spent between 5-10 per cent of its GDP on refugee related costs - accommodation, food, clothing and footwear, health and social welfare, as well as education. Before the NATO aggression, international humanitarian assistance covered only 10 per cent of total refugee-related costs.

In the prevailing precarious economic situation, as a consequence of several years-long outer wall of the sanctions and NATO aggression on our country, the care for refugees and internally displaced persons requires great sacrifices. A large portion of domestic population is in a very difficult situation and is not in a position to shoulder the burden of the costs related to refugees and internally displaced persons. In such circumstances, there is a continuing pressure of refugees and internally displaced persons to be accommodated in collective centres. There are more than 650 of those in the FR of Yugoslavia. In 1999 alone, the accommodation costs in collective centres in the FR of Yugoslavia amounted to US \$ 23 million, out of which US \$ 9 million were provided by UNHCR for heating, maintenance and partly for food (this winter).

In view of the above, it is clear that the FR of Yugoslavia will not be able to solve all the problems of refugees and internally displaced persons alone, without a substantial international assistance for accommodation, creation of conditions for normal life and durable solutions. In this context, we consider that it would be appropriate to hold a donor conference on the humanitarian situation in the FR of Yugoslavia. Even more so, since such conference would not be held for purely political reasons, unlike the conferences on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, and a separate one on assistance to Kosovo and Metohija.

(3) Due to non-implementation of the Dayton peace accords (Annex 7) and the Agreement on the normalization of relations between the FR of

Yugoslavia and Croatia, by Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the number of refugees returning to those countries is negligible.

The return to Bosnia and Herzegovina produced marginal results. Out of around 8,000 applications, some 1,200 were granted. There were 1,050 UNHCR-assisted returns to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The competent authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina ignored 6,500 applications. The last granted application for return to Bosnia and Herzegovina dates back to August 1998. It is impossible to get accurate information on the number of the so-called spontaneous returns to Bosnia and Herzegovina, since there have been no cases of deregistration of refugees and because many refugees "commute between the FR of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina".

The number of returns to Croatia is minimal primarily due to the lack of political will on the part of Croatian authorities and a lot of red tape with a view to slowing down or preventing the returns.

Until the end of September 1999, 4,000 people returned to Croatia with the assistance of UNHCR, although there were 25,000 applications for return. Out of that number, 7,700 got permission to return, 5,600 got permission but have nowhere to go, because their houses are either destroyed or inhabited by Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina, while 7,400 received no response at all.

The FR of Yugoslavia expects the international community to live up to its promises concerning the return of Serb refugees to Croatia. The change of Croatia's position cannot be expected without a genuine pressure by the international community. This is particularly evident on the basis of the first activities of a new Croatian Government which essentially continues the policy of the previous Government in this field, and insists on conditioning the returns on the financial assistance of the international community to Croatia. Only for housing of 7,000 Serb refugee families (16,500 people) whose returns have been granted, the Croatian Government is seeking US \$ 55 million in assistance.

This clearly speaks that Croatia continues with the previous policy in this field and is not ready to essentially deal with the issue of refugee and expelled Serbs, namely with the issue of their existence, restitution of their property and equal treatment of all those wishing to return. Legal amendments and formal administrative approvals do not suffice. It is obvious that a programme of return, as envisaged by the new Croatian Government as well, is aimed at delaying the process of returns, whereby refugees would lose interest as well as the international community which would finally give up further pressure, which would result in Croatia's taking the issue of the return of Serbs off the agenda for good.

In the prevailing difficult economic situation, when the brunt of the burden of caring for the refugees is being borne by our country, it is difficult for the FR of Yugoslavia to accept the expectation of the international community that, in the absence of conditions for an unimpeded return to Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, this process be replaced by local integration.

Repatriation of refugees as the most acceptable durable solution is a priority for the FR of Yugoslavia. The implementation of this kind of a durable solution requires prior guarantees of both the international community and the Governments of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina that refugees will be accepted in the regions they are returning to and that they will be provided conditions for a permanent and safe life in dignity.

At the same time, a number of refugees will not be able to get back to the regions they have been driven out of. That is why it will be necessary, with the assistance of the international community, in particular UNHCR, to provide financial resources for their permanent accommodation, i.e. integration in the FR of Yugoslavia.

(4) A brutal aggression committed by NATO against our country allegedly to prevent a humanitarian disaster of the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija, actually resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe of the Serbian, Montenegrin and other non-Albanian population. An exodus of internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija is a consequence of a blatant non-implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) by KFOR and UNMIK, as well as of the conduct without hindrance of the policy of genocide and ethnic cleansing practised by the terrorists of the so-called KLA under the auspices of the United Nations.

Since KFOR and UNMIK came to the Province, more than 8,000 serious criminal acts have been committed against Serbs and other non-Albanians, of which 4,354 were most serious crimes. From 12 June 1999 to 27 February 2000, 839 Serbs and other non-Albanians have been killed and 784 abducted or missing. More than 50,000 Serbian homes have been looted or set on fire, while 84 monasteries and temples belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church have been demolished or destroyed.

Responsibility for the ethnic cleansing lies with the civil and security presences of the United Nations, which failed to discharge their mandate under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) of ensuring a safe environment for all inhabitants of Kosovo and Metohija.

It is expected that the international community, namely KFOR and UNMIK, will consistently carry out their obligations relating to keeping a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional character of this southern Serbian Province, guaranteeing full security and safety of all the population, irrespective of their ethnic origin, as well as their human rights and the rule of law.

The international community has demonstrated how efficient it was when Albanians returned to Kosovo and Metohija. In this context, it is hoped that the same international community will be equally efficient in ensuring safe conditions for an unimpeded return of Serb and Montenegrin IDPs and other non-Albanian population of Kosovo and Metohija, fully respecting all their political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights, especially the right to life, safety of the person, free movement, the right to private property, employment, health care, education, etc.

March 2000

-----